

National Court Framework Update

22 May 2018

Registrars and Registrar Titles

Since 2015, under the National Court Framework (NCF), the Federal Court has been progressively undertaking fundamental reforms as to the way it operates. The key purpose of the NCF is to reinvigorate the Court's approach to case management by further modernising the Court's operations so that the Court is better placed to meet the demands of litigants and can operate as a truly national and international Court.

The NCF reforms have been successfully implemented in respect of the judicial work of the Court, including organising and managing the Court's work by reference to nine National Practice Areas (NPAs), the introduction of national direct-to-chambers duty judge arrangements and ensuring nationally consistent and simplified practice through a suite of new national practice notes, including the Central Practice Note. The reforms are now being extended to apply to the important legal work undertaken by registrars of the Court, including how that work is allocated and managed nationally.

Registrars of the Federal Court carry out a range of critical functions, including supporting judges by conducting mediations as part of effective Court-annexed ADR processes; undertaking challenging and often complex case management in support of judges (such as discovery disputes, return of subpoena matters and conferences of experts) and by presiding in Court and making judicial determinations over a wide variety of matters, primarily in the field of insolvency law.

In addition, under the NCF reforms, registrars will support National and Registry Coordinating Judges with the judicial management of each NPA, including the development of new, or the enhancement of existing, NPA user groups. Registrars will also continue to provide direct support to the lawyers and litigants through their duty registrar work and liaison with the profession.

New registrar titles, commensurate with the important roles performed by registrars, will apply from Monday, 28 May 2018. The new titles, for the following registrar roles, are outlined below:

New Title	Previous Title
-----------	----------------

Principal Judicial Registrar & National Operations Registrar	National Operations Registrar
Deputy Principal Judicial Registrar & Deputy National Operations Registrar	Deputy National Operations Registrar
National Judicial Registrar & District Registrar	District Registrar
National Judicial Registrar – Appeals	National Appeals Registrar
National Judicial Registrar – Native Title	National Native Title Registrar
Judicial Registrar	Deputy District Registrar
Judicial Registrar – Native Title	Native Title Registrar
National Registrar	NCF Registrar

It should be noted that, notwithstanding the importance of the new titles, there is no formal change (in a statutory sense) to the status of a registrar of the Federal Court or Federal Circuit Court, and parties can continue to refer to registrars in Court in the usual way (i.e. using the title “Registrar”).

Similarly, certain formalities, such as the form of a registrar’s order, will remain unchanged. It should also be noted that the registrars of the Federal Court are also registrars of the Federal Circuit Court (general federal law). However, the change to registrar titles applies within the Federal Court only, and there is no such change presently proposed with respect to the title of registrars in the Federal Circuit Court (general federal law).

If you have any queries regarding the above, please contact the Court via email (query@fedcourt.gov.au).

Sia Lagos
National Operations Registrar